

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-10. (canceled).

Claim 11 (currently amended): An apparatus which supports a preform, said preform including a supporting core, the apparatus comprising:

 a rotation mechanism that rotates said supporting core of the preform about a horizontal axis;

 an adjustable support member; and

 a rotatable wheel mounted on said adjustable support member,

 wherein said rotatable wheel (1) has a rotational axis which is parallel to said supporting core, (2) is mounted to rotate freely, and (3) includes a tread strip which comes into tangential contact with said preform,

wherein said adjustable support member is adjustable between a variable active end position in which said rotatable wheel is in contact with said preform, and an inactive end position in which said rotatable wheel is spaced apart from said preform, and said installation further comprises:

a sensor that measures a preform characteristic indicative of a sag of said preform; and

a servo-controller coupled to said sensor, said servo-controller adjusting said adjustable support member depending on said preform characteristic measured by said sensor.

Claim 12: Cancelled.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim ~~12~~11, further comprising a plurality of rotatable wheels in addition to said rotatable wheel having respective associated adjustable support members, said plurality of rotatable wheels being disposed at regular axial intervals and radially to said horizontal axis.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The apparatus according to claim ~~12~~11, wherein when said adjustable support member assumes said variable active end position, said rotatable wheel is in contact with a bottom of a periphery of said preform.